

S O Report – Bolton Interfaith Council- 3rd September 2018

Once again a very warm and sincere welcome to all our executive members for our management meeting. As we have now entered the second half of the year- new challenges lie ahead and it is a case of able to sustain the interfaith work locally. Without any doubt, many things will have to change in consideration of impact the local authority financial support and more cohesive working together with partners as that is the way forward.

Thank you to Philip, Alison and Shashikantbhai for their contribution with our first public AGM which was very well attended and had very many positives. Thank you also to Rob Knight, Saeedbhai and Tony McNeil along with other prominent members attending. It would be good to pencil next year's date now which could be useful to work towards.

Please see some brief details of our work listed below. Please do not hesitate to ask or suggest any ideas which could help us to improve our work. Support and guidance from executive members is vital and is appreciated by everyone.

Ambassadors – From this week – 6th September we start a new year with all 10 members committing to stay on with approval of their parents. We appreciate the support by Emmanuel Church as our venue for meetings every Thursday evening. This week, I will be writing to schools regarding recruiting new members. This year two of our members Sanaa Makkan & Emily Fox achieved excellent GCSE grades- congratulations to both.

Faith trails – Few weeks back, I had provided the statistics regarding the faith trail visits for the last financial year. Those stats show many good things in Bolton for the project- above all a great “Partnership Working “model for which everyone deserves praise.

There is no doubt that this is an extremely valuable project in terms of community cohesion and engagement with community, schools and many groups. As you know there are issues around the delivery of the project which I would urge to be sorted out as soon as possible as the new school term is beginning and requests are coming in already so needs to be agreed. It is not helpful to work under clouds of misinformation and hence misunderstanding

as it needs everyone's support and commitment to make a difference in the community. Apart from the faith groups, interfaith council the support of Bolton Council via Faith Leader's Forum is important to give the project value which benefits everyone. Bolton has received a lot of praise for this project.

Forthcoming Events- Regardless of uncertainty, we must remain positive and carry on with events that we lead and we also support. We have these events to follow: **"International Day of Peace"** –on 21st September in the Walker Suite- Victoria Hall, **"National Interfaith Week"** – 11 to 18th November and supporting – **" Starting Well"** – VISION 2030 THEME led by BCCC conference on 2nd October, **" Celebrating Faith Festivals-** led by University of Bolton on 27th November, **" Daserra "** – BHF event on 19th October at the Bolton Indian Sports Club are some of the events and may be others to come.

We also hope to have an **"Open Forum"** session with Revd Canon Dr Chris Bracegirdle about his role and aspirations for the town- details to follow.

The Annual event of **"Holocaust Memorial Day Service"** will be held on Wednesday 23rd January 2019 in the Festival Hall.

Moving Forward- The process which started almost 15 months ago of cementing our working together more cohesively between the three faith groups and BIC in the challenging times ahead for funding and sustaining good work is ongoing. There is no question that the need to do this is vital for our community as a whole to benefit. It will help to solve some of the difficulties we will face. I do hope the forthcoming meetings to be attended by Phil Austin and Phil Mason with groups will help to quicken progress.

Volunteers- we are fortunate to call upon our volunteers to help out as required. Jai, Hemaben, Carl, Muquadas, Dip, Ishwer &Jamilaben. Their support is very much appreciated.

During the school holidays- Sanaa, Aminah ,Meera and more so Puja came to the office to help out with few things.

BIC Executive Membership- An area of real concern if we are to build upon our work and reputation we have and to sustain the good relationships we already have in the community. The representation needs be taken seriously

and we have consistency in attendance, commitment and feedback is essential. We need to ensure if Keith Galley will represent the GMP as Rob Knight has moved on to other areas of work. I must Thank Rob for his guidance, updates and being so supportive for many years.

Funding- Perhaps more important to chase external funding than ever before. I have applied for Young Ambassadors Project with Post Code Lottery and waiting to hear if our application has gone through to stage 2. We also had £200 from Forever Manchester and same amount from Bolton at Home for the Great Get Together event held in June 2018.

Strengthening BIC – Again as mentioned before, we need to strengthen the executive committee with co-opting community individuals –may be retired professionals and others who would bring new way of thinking and input in the value of interfaith work. Once things are settled we need an “away day” to look at ways of taking the work forward. I can assure you, there could be a lot of interest in the community.

News Letter- One of the things that has not been done for a long time and I have to admit that is a failure on my part. However I am hoping with support to produce one before the end of the year. I would be very grateful if members can provide short articles, stories of personal journey, views about interfaith work or anything else you can think that would be useful will be welcome. Please let me have any materials by 30th October 2018.

Website- Through unavailability of Muqadas regularly due to his work- the updating has fallen behind. He will still do his best to help. I will be requesting the Bolton CVS Volunteer Service for help to recruit an individual who could do this more on an agreed basis.

Appreciations – Thank you everyone for the support from members, many excellent partners, volunteers, places of worships, young ambassadors, Interfaith Network UK and many others. Any questions or suggestions please do contact me.

Kind regards in Peace & Friendship- Chan Parmar for BIC - 3RD September 2018.